



 **MLB**
FIRST PITCH™



Principles and Skills

MLB First Pitch follows playful learning principles

Joyful

Fun first and foremost without the need for direct technical instruction or coaching

Purposeful

Tangible signs of progress across skills applicable beyond baseball

Immersive

Deliver playful learning experiences via free play, guided play and games

Continuous

Skills are revisited and built upon in each session

Connected

Focus on social play, teamwork and collaboration

Throughout the program of sessions, players will learn and develop baseball focused active skills while also nurturing a number of personal skills and qualities. On each activity card, two personal skills have been identified that the activity supports. As the activator, you can use the supporting statements to help develop these skills in the players. They can be used as personal or group targets.

Active:

- **Hitting**
- **Pitching**
- **Fielding**
(catching & throwing)
- **Running**
- **Gameplay**

Personal:

- **Critical thinking**
- **Leadership**
- **Resilience**
- **Self-esteem**
- **Teamwork**



Structure

Activities are designed to follow a simple delivery structure over 60 minutes.

The timings are flexible and can be adapted to suit the session time available in two ways:

- Reduce or increase the timings of all four activities
- Bypass 3rd base activity



Dingers

Comes from the term, "humdinger". In baseball it refers to an exciting Home Run.



Key focus of session:

Mastering basic hitting technique

Equipment Required

- 1 Base set
- 1 Batting tee
- 12 Cones
- 3 Foam baseball bats
- 1 Plastic baseball bat
- 15 Foam baseballs
- 4 Oversized foam balls
- 3 Large inflatable balls

MLB Teams in session



BALTIMORE
ORIOLES



BOSTON
RED SOX



NEW YORK
YANKEES



TAMPA BAY
RAYS



TORONTO
BLUE JAYS

Activity and Skills Overview

HITTING



Batter Up
Critical Thinking
Self-esteem



Fly Ball Frenzy
Resilience
Teamwork



Hit Then Run
Critical Thinking
Leadership



Home Run Derby
Critical Thinking
Teamwork

Tips

- Communicate batting position ready for ball to be pitched:
 1. Feet wider than shoulders
 2. Bend knees
 3. Grip with hands together
- Batters take a small step forward with front foot and shift weight for back to front leg when swinging
- Keep eyes on the ball and follow through with swing to past opposite ear

Home Run Derby

How to Play

1. Create two teams, **Blue Jays** and **Rays**.
2. **Blue Jays** start at station A. The team hits the ball off a batting tee aiming for two cones designated as the home run distance – approx. 30m from the tee. Each player has 8 balls to hit as many home runs as possible in the allocated time. The other players help retrieve the balls.
3. **Rays** start at station B. The team is split into two. One half takes it in turn to hit 8 balls off cones, tossing the ball in the air and using their hands as a bat. The other half of the team takes turns to field the balls back to the cones.
4. Switch teams over so everyone gets a turn at each activity.

Personal Skills

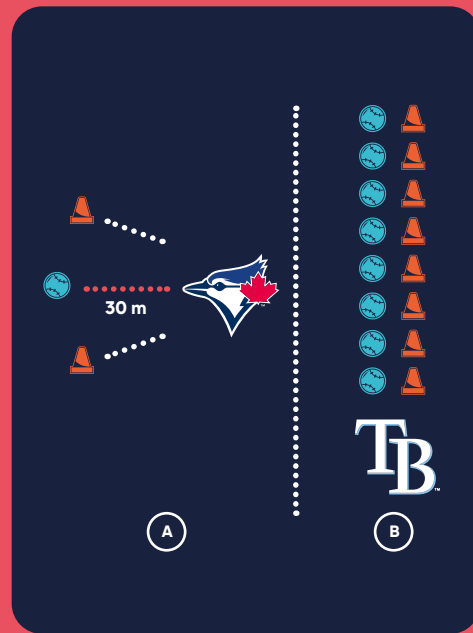
Critical Thinking

I take time to review my actions before my next turn

Teamwork

I communicate with my teammates using positive language

Home Plate
Gameplay
20 minutes



Easier:

Reduce distance to Home Run line from batting tee

Harder:

Remove batting tee and have a player pitch underarm to the batter

Gold Gloves

The Gold Gloves award is given annually to the MLB players for the best fielding performances in each fielding position.



Key focus of session:

Build confidence in throwing and catching techniques and increase familiarity with gameplay scenarios

Equipment Required

- 1 Base set
- 4 Cones
- 15 Foam baseballs
- 2 Oversized foam balls

MLB Teams in session



HOUSTON
ASTROS



OAKLAND
ATHLETICS



ATLANTA
BRAVES



SAN DIEGO
PADRES



MIAMI
MARLINS



NEW YORK
YANKEES

Activity and Skills Overview

FIELDING



Astros Ball

Critical Thinking
Teamwork



Grounders and Flys

Critical Thinking
Resilience



Rockies Racing

Critical Thinking
Teamwork



Around the World Rangers 2.0

Resilience
Teamwork

Tips

- Wide base
Feet should be slightly wider than shoulders
- Low Body
Bend your knees
- Hands out in front of body, not between the feet

Grounders and Flys

How to Play

1. Split the players into pairs. Players line up in two rows facing their partner.
2. Partners throw the ball between them, choosing to throw either a 'fly ball' (high looping throw) or a 'grounder' (low bouncing ball).
3. After 5 successful passes and catches, the player with the ball should step back.
4. Pairs continue throwing and catching until the allotted time is up.

Personal Skills

Critical thinking

I make a decision about where to throw

Resilience

I try again when I don't succeed

2nd Base
Skills Game
10 minutes



Easier:

Use just one throwing action before progressing to another

Harder:

Play in 4s (2V2)

Steals

A steal is when a runner takes the initiative to run quickly to the next base while the opposition isn't looking. This generally happens when the pitcher is pitching or getting ready to pitch.



Key focus of session:

Building understanding and confidence with baseball gameplay

Equipment Required

- 1 Base set
- 12 Cones
- 4 Foam baseballs
- 3 Large inflatable balls

MLB Teams in session



ATLANTA
BRAVES



MIAMI
MARLINS



NEW YORK
METS



PHILADELPHIA
PHILLIES



WASHINGTON
NATIONALS

Activity and Skills Overview

RUNNING



Marlins Multipliers

Critical Thinking
Self-esteem



Running the Bases

Leadership
Teamwork



Relay Rays

Critical Thinking
Resilience



Cubs Kickers

Resilience
Self-esteem

Tips

- When running to each base, keep head still and eyes focused on the front of the base
- Always touch the inside corner of the base in front of you when advancing to the next base
- Pump arms when running – arms at 45 degrees and hands move from 'hip to lip'

Relay Rays

How to Play

1. Using two diamonds, keep the group in four teams (2 x **Nationals** and 2 x **Mets**). Two teams per diamond.
2. **Nationals** start on home plate and **Mets** start on 2nd base.
3. On GO, the first player from both teams should start running around the diamond, touching the bases with their feet on the way around until they get back to their team. They should tag the next player who will repeat the running around the diamond.
4. Once all players in the team have run the diamond then the team should sit down. The fastest team wins the round.
5. Run three or more rounds, depending on time.

Personal Skills

Critical thinking

I consider how I can move more effectively each time

Resilience

I keep going when my team does not win

3rd Base
Mini Game
20 minutes



Easier:

Use mats to increase base size

Harder:

Use stopwatch to record time and set target to beat

Aces

In baseball, "ace" typically refers to a team's No. 1 pitcher.



Key focus of session:

Refining pitching technique and focusing on accuracy and consistency

Equipment Required

- 1 Base set
- 1 Batting tee
- 10 Cones
- 3 Foam baseball bats
- 1 Plastic baseball bat
- 15 Foam baseballs
- 4 Oversized foam balls

MLB Teams in session



Activity and Skills Overview

PITCHING



Double Trouble

Critical Thinking
Self-esteem



Bullpen Braves 2.0

Leadership
Resilience



Non-stop Nationals

Self-esteem
Teamwork



Dodgers Ball

Critical Thinking
Resilience

Tips

- Pitching hand should follow through and extend to target after the ball is released
- Pitch with elbow above the shoulder
- Pitch with wrist outside the elbow

Bullpen Braves 2.0

How to Play

1. Arrange two lines of cones 4m apart. Split the group into two teams, **Dodgers** and **Giants**.
2. Teams line up behind a line of cones, facing a partner. Each pair has one ball.
3. Using the pitching technique, players pitch the ball at their partner.
4. Each time a catch is made, the catcher should take a step back before pitching back to their partner.
5. If a ball is dropped, then the pair moves back to the starting position.
6. Activator to time 60 seconds. The activator should reward pairs that show the best teamwork.

Personal Skills

Leadership

I am positive when I lead

Resilience

I keep going when I don't succeed

2nd Base
Skills Game
10 minutes



Easier:

Use bean bag or non-rolling object

Harder:

Pairs start further apart

World Series

The World Series is the culmination of the baseball season. Two teams play a best of seven series to determine that year's champion.



Key focus of session:

Bringing all skills together to provide an individual and collective sense of achievement

Equipment Required

- 1 Base set
- 1 Batting tee
- 12 Cones
- 3 Foam baseball bats
- 1 Plastic baseball bat
- 10 Foam baseballs
- 2 Oversized foam balls

MLB Teams in session



Activity and Skills Overview

GAMEPLAY



Position Pirates

Leadership
Self-esteem



Rockies Racing 2.0

Critical Thinking
Self-esteem



First Pitch World Series

Resilience
Teamwork

Tips

- When hitting, eyes on the ball and make contact in front of Home Plate
- Pump your arms when running to help you move feet and body faster
- Step forward with your front foot to the target when throwing to help throw faster

First Pitch World Series

How to Play

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1. Organize the group into two teams, **Rays** and **Dodgers**, one fielding and one batting.
2. The aim is to score more runs than the other team. The batting team scores 1 run when a player makes it round all the bases, like in baseball.
3. The ball should be lightly tossed by a pitcher or hit off the batting tee.
4. A batter can have three attempts to hit the ball, then runs to 1st base, running even if they miss all three attempts.
5. A player is declared as being out when:
 - The ball is hit and then caught by a fielding player without the ball touching the ground.
 - A runner does not reach a base before the fielder standing on the same base receives the ball from teammates.
 - A fielder holding the ball tags a runner between the bases.
6. An inning is complete when all players on the batting team have had their turn to bat.
7. The batting and fielding team then switch over.
8. Play as many innings per team as time allows.



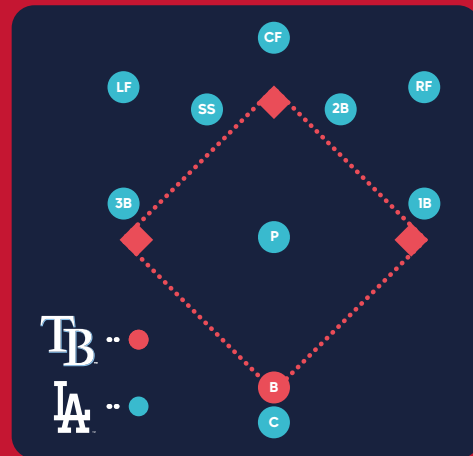
Personal Skills

Resilience

I try again when I don't succeed

Teamwork

I cooperate with teammates when discussing new rules



Turn over for more

First Pitch World Series

Extra Activity

1. While the batting team players are waiting to for their turn, get into pairs and practice throwing and catching.
2. Players should try to catch with two hands; one hand; one hand outstretched.



 **MLB**
FIRST PITCH

World Series

Easier:

Players batting can choose to throw, use hand, racquet or baseball bat

Harder:

Players create a new rule